

**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
MEETING OF FEBRUARY 10, 2015**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairwoman Marti Stiglich called the February 10, 2015 Economic Development Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Rocky Hill Town Hall, 761 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT.

Those in attendance: Vice Chairman Mark Walworth, Commissioner Christopher Duff and Commissioner Sharon D. Mounds. Also present: Ray Carpentino (Economic Development Director), Cathy Carone (Executive Administrator of the Rocky Hill Chamber of Commerce) and Michael Frawley & Associate (Solar City).

Those absent: Commissioner John Roderick and Commissioner Timothy Tuller.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Duff made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 13, 2015 meeting of the Economic Development Commission. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Walworth and adopted unanimously by those present.**

**3. ROCKY HILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATE BUSINESS INTRODUCTION**

Cathy Carone introduced herself and said that she brought representatives with her this evening from Solar City, which has been in Rocky Hill for eighteen months. Michael Frawley, who is the Regional Director of Solar City for the Northeast Region, said that Solar City is the largest residential solar provider in the land because they are the best. There are over three thousand installers in Connecticut alone. Their relationship with Tesla Motor Vehicles is what separates them from other companies and Elon Musk is the Chairman on their Board. Solar City's commercial clients and some of the residential clients are totally off of the grid. They are storing their own solar energy. Solar City qualifies homes and they try to find homeowners who are interested in gaining energy from the sun. Every client saves money. Michael Frawley introduced his associate (Luke), who is the Area State Manager.

Ray Carpentino asked how many employees there are in Rocky Hill. Michael Frawley said they have over one hundred and seventy employees. Ray Carpentino confirmed that Solar City does

more than just residential. Michael Frawley said that Solar City also does commercial and schools. He mentioned some municipalities that have gone solar (i.e. Avon and New Britain, etc.). Solar City warranties and guarantees everything.

Commissioner Mounds asked if Solar City does the financing. Michael Frawley said Solar City has the powers to lend its own money. They are capped at 2.9% annually. He then mentioned the Power Purchase Agreement. If someone's home qualifies, they pay a cheaper rate for the power that is produced and they don't pay for the panels. Solar City also has options if people want to take a loan out or if they want to pay for this outright.

Chairwoman Stiglich asked if the solar panels won't work if the electricity goes out. Michael Frawley said that solar power won't come to the rescue right now if the electricity goes out but hopefully the installation of batteries for this will be in all of the residential homes soon because there is a mass production of these going on now.

Commissioner Duff said one of the options is that Solar City helps homeowners purchase this. He thinks this is the field that has a lot of leaps in efficiency, especially over the last couple of years, and he thinks this might make some people a little shy about jumping in now. He asked if there is any upgrade if someone has the Power Purchase Agreement. Michael Frawley said that solar panels don't take "leaps and bounds" with regards to technology. The science experiment for solar is over and it is getting better incrementally. People have the option to buy this outright. After the fifth year, and every year thereafter, the third party appraises this at fair market value. More and more people are buying solar panels because the price for them is falling. Commissioner Duff asked if Solar City does a financial qualification for homeowners or if it is more about the alignment of a house and how much sun it can capture on the roof. Michael Frawley said Solar City, for no cost or obligation, checks the interior structure of a roof to make sure it is sound structurally and they will then go on the exterior of the roof to see how many sun hours it gets. Nine hundred hours of annual sunlight is needed to qualify. A week after Solar City goes out to a home, they will come back with a full blueprint design of the home, as well as how much someone will be able to save in the upcoming years. Commissioner Duff asked if Solar City has had success with apartment and condo complexes in the past. Michael Frawley said it gets a "little hairy" with condo associations and it is an "uphill battle". Commissioner Duff asked Michael Frawley how homeowners or businesses would get in touch with him and his representatives because they are a national company. Michael Frawley said the Rocky Hill office is at 714 Brook Street and his phone number is (617) 308-0998.

Chairwoman Stiglich thanked Michael Frawley for sharing some interesting things and she then mentioned how they strongly recommend Rocky Hill's residents to support local businesses in the community.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

#### **5. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ray Carpentino referred to his memo to Town Manager Scaife. (Please see the First Attachment.)

**a. Ames redevelopment status**

Ray Carpentino said Kim Ricci (Director of Planning) has been working with the Planning and Zoning Commission to draft Multi-Family Regulations in mixed use developments and there will probably be a public hearing on this next month. He told the Commissioners that he had given them the actual amendment for this. (Please see the Second Attachment.) Chairwoman Stiglich asked Ray Carpentino if he thinks all of the parties will be in sync with regards to the mixed use development. Ray Carpentino knows that the developer absolutely is and he believes that the Planning and Zoning Commission is. Chairwoman Stiglich referred to what is being proposed or what will be proposed. Ray Carpentino said there is no proposal yet and the owner will have to wait until the amendment is approved to really get into the design.

Commissioner Duff asked if they have the Business Park II Zone that they have been discussing for clean manufacturing. Ray Carpentino said that is included in the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Hopefully in concert with the Planning Department and once the POCD gets approved, they can draft a Regulation to revise some of the Zoning Districts to allow that type of use in areas that don't allow that now.

Commissioner Duff referred to the Multi-Family Zoning Amendment and the mixed use development section. There is a lot in there as to how a site should be laid out, etc. but he said it doesn't seem like there is anything about the spirit of the mixed use development and he thinks this got them in trouble on Brook Street because there are two very different developments on the same site. He asked if there is anything where mixed use is being defined as a more integrated development. Chairwoman Stiglich said not in this proposal but there is a whole section in the POCD that has to do with the character. The Town had a Committee and then it didn't have one but it looks like there is one again. Commissioner Duff asked if this would become codified as part of their Planning and Zoning Regulations. Chairwoman Stiglich said no and that this would be the POCD. Commissioner Duff asked how this would get them out of what had happened at Brook Street where they had an apartment building with a medical building which isn't proper mixed use. Ray Carpentino told Commissioner Duff that he disagreed with him on that. Ray Carpentino referred to a mixed use combination of commercial, recreational, cultural, civic or educational uses including retail and multi-family. There is a special permit process and the Planning and Zoning Commission has the leeway to look at the actual uses for a particular property. He said Chairwoman Stiglich was referring to the Design Review Board that the Town used to have and now there is an Architecture Advisory Review Board. Design guidelines were drafted in 2007 but this could probably use a little tweaking. Any commercial project will have to go to that Board first, if any people are appointed to it, or this would have to be within the timeframe of the Planning and Zoning Commission to get recommendations on the design, etc.

Commissioner Mounds asked where the Proposed Zoning Amendment came from. Ray Carpentino said Kim Ricci had drafted that and the Planning and Zoning Commission is looking at that right now. Commissioner Mounds asked if the POCD is the "chicken" or the "egg". Ray

Carpentino said they have a POCD now from 2001 and this will be a legal document until July 2016. Commissioner Mounds confirmed that the Planning and Zoning Commission can enact a new Regulation at any time. Ray Carpentino said absolutely. The POCD is just a plan but the Zoning Regulations are law. The POCD is supposed to guide the Zoning Regulations and the Subdivision Regulations. The draft of the POCD does include mixed uses, etc. Commissioner Mounds referred to Item # 4 on the draft. Some of the definitions are right out of the State Statutes so she confirmed that they are talking about whether to add these sections into the new Regulation and not about changing the language of the Statute. Ray Carpentino said that is right. Commissioner Mounds then asked if the definition for apartment is from the State Statute and she asked about an efficiency because that wouldn't be a suite of rooms. Ray Carpentino said these questions will have to be presented at the public hearing. He mentioned that that definition could have been written to not allow efficiencies but he isn't sure where it came from.

**b. Business Visitation Program**

Ray Carpentino said this has been inactive because of the holidays, etc. plus he has been working on grants that have deadlines. He referred to how he had mentioned last month that this will be resurrected, etc.

**c. Plan of Conservation & Development – Status Update/Proposal Discussion**

Ray Carpentino believes that the public informational meeting for this will be on March 31, 2015 and there will be an official public hearing sometime after that. Chairwoman Stiglich said the POCD (draft) is on the Town's website. She fully agrees with the way this has been set up in terms of them telling what they want done and then the action plan being given on how to get it done. Ray Carpentino told the Commissioners to e-mail him or Kim Ricci with any comments or questions they have about this.

**d. Municipal Solar Energy Project Update**

Ray Carpentino said the Town is still in the process of negotiating with a company for the 6 to 9 Megawatt solar field project on Town property. They are hoping to have this given to the Town Council by April 2015 for approval. Vice Chairman Walworth asked if that will be a standalone system and if it will be able to provide power if they lose the line or he asked if this is line synched so that it has to have a utility 60 Hertz synchronization. Ray Carpentino said this is connected to the grid so he doesn't think it could run standalone. This will power five of their Town accounts. The developer can only sell 3 Megawatts by Statute to the municipality and they will have to find buyers beyond that.

**e. Town Center West Redevelopment Project Status Update**

Commissioner Duff asked if the weather has set them back with regards to what they are trying to do on this site and Ray Carpentino said yes.

**f. River's Edge (Foundry) Development Project Update**

Ray Carpentino said they are still in the process of having the remediation action plan developed. He will be informed by the Engineering Department as to when the next meeting will be with the Department of Transportation.

**g. Silas Deane Streetscape**

Ray Carpentino said the contract with BL Companies was signed so the Town Staff has to have a kickoff meeting with them. The deadline for the STEAP (Small Town Economic Assistance Program) grant application is late spring of 2015. Chairwoman Stiglich asked what the amount is again. Ray Carpentino said the total is \$500,000. Three hundred thousand will be for the Façade Program (for Silas Deane Highway businesses) and \$200,000 will be for the Streetscape. This is in addition to the \$433,000.

**h. Business Assistance Efforts**

Ray Carpentino said that he and Kim Ricci have been meeting with the new owner of the Kawasaki property. Commissioner Mounds asked if they are moving from somewhere else and she asked if they have any other business in Rocky Hill. Ray Carpentino said they are starting out and they will have to go through the Planning and Zoning process. The owner doesn't have any other business in Rocky Hill but he has a farm in Wethersfield. Commissioner Duff asked if the owner has a timeframe. Ray Carpentino said not really.

Commissioner Duff is looking forward to having the microbrewery in Town. Ray Carpentino said by State Statute, the owner of that will have to hire an Architect. Chairwoman Stiglich asked if the lease has been signed for this and she asked Ray Carpentino if he was at liberty to tell them where this will be. Ray Carpentino believes the lease has been signed but he couldn't tell them where this microbrewery will be located. Commissioner Duff asked if this will be approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission in the spring or later. Ray Carpentino said the owner is probably hoping to come sometime in the spring. This will be a two person operation and the tap room is the key component of small microbreweries.

Ray Carpentino referred to the six acre undeveloped lot on Corporate Place that has been there for years and that an engineering firm has just acquired. Commissioner Mounds asked what type of business will be there. Ray Carpentino said civil engineering.

Commissioner Duff asked if there was an update on the property across the street from the Ames property that has been opening slowly. Ray Carpentino said this has been dragging on for three years but there is a kitchen in there now. There are some issues with the Health Department with regards to the types of materials, etc. The owner also owns a bunch of salons. Chairwoman Stiglich said people who aren't in the restaurant business don't recognize how important it is to have the right kind of people coming in to tell how to set up the kitchen.

**i. Miscellaneous**

There was nothing anyone wanted to discuss.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE/DISCUSSION**

Ray Carpentino gave the Commissioners a copy of the Planning and Zoning Commission's agenda for its meeting on February 18, 2015. He highlighted the item on it that deals with the solar project and the item with regards to the POCD draft being discussed at that meeting.

**7. ADJOURN**

**Vice Chairman Walworth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:42 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mounds and adopted unanimously by those present.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth  
Recording Secretary